



## Chapter 4

# Rules & Regulations for Safe Driving

### Speed Control

Exceeding the speed limit is a common cause of fatal and other types of accidents. Always obey the speed limit. Speed affects almost everything that can happen while driving. A good rule is to keep up with the flow of traffic at any legal speed. In order to make safe or emergency stops when necessary, it is important to keep enough distance from surrounding traffic.

New Jersey law sets top speed limits for any given road, street, highway or freeway.

#### New Jersey Speed Limits (unless otherwise posted)

SPEED  
LIMIT  
**25**

business or residential districts

school zone – shall be posted with  
regulatory signs

SPEED  
LIMIT  
**35**

suburban business and residential  
areas – shall be posted with  
regulatory signs

SPEED  
LIMIT  
**50**

all other roadways

SPEED  
LIMIT  
**55**

certain state highways  
(as posted) and all interstates

SPEED  
LIMIT  
**65**

certain highways (as posted)

- Drivers pay double fines for exceeding a 65 mph limit by 10 miles per hour or more. Double fines also apply to most other moving violations committed in a 65 mph zone.

Never drive faster than weather, road or other conditions safely allow, regardless of the posted speed limit. Judge your speed control by existing conditions. Motorists should slow down to be able to see clearly and stop quickly in traffic.

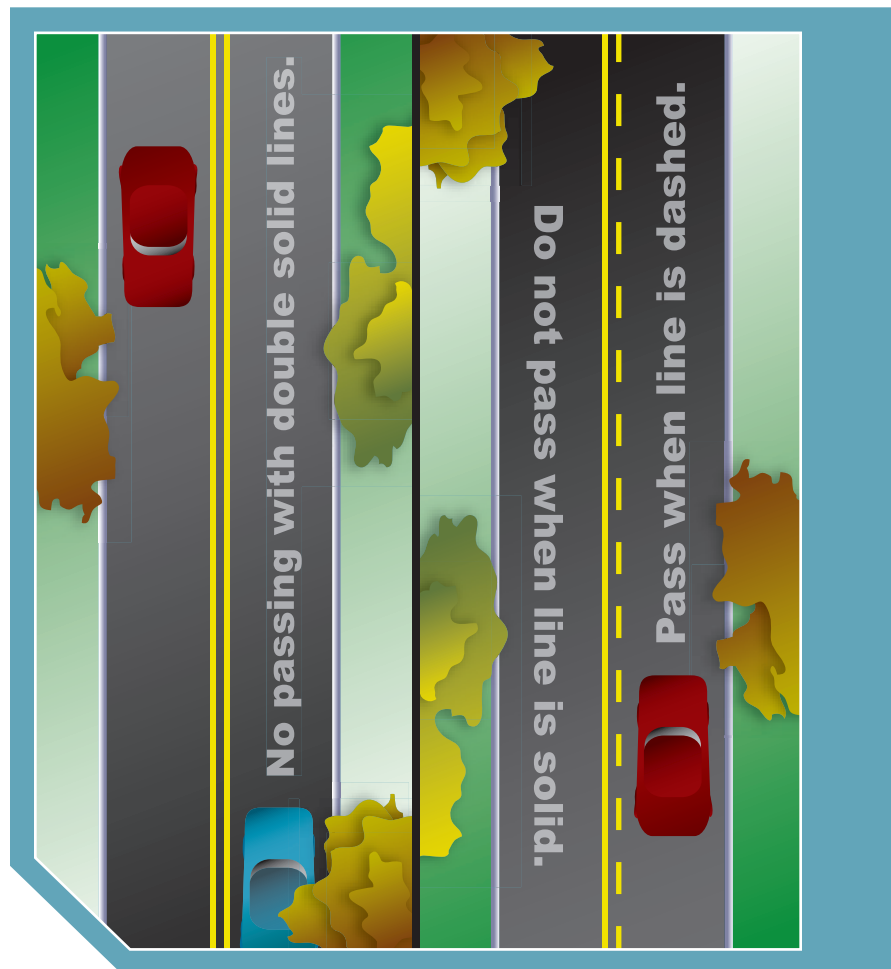
#### It is important to slow down:

- on narrow or winding roads
- at intersections or railroad crossings
- on hills
- at sharp or blind curves
- where pedestrians or driving hazards are present
- on wet or slippery roads

(If keeping up with the normal flow of traffic is difficult because of car problems, pull off the road.)

## Passing

Know the proper lane for normal driving and how to change lanes safely. Rules for passing depend on road type. Stay to the right of the center lines. Passing is only safe when there is no oncoming traffic. Watch for lane markings. If the centerlines are both solid, passing is prohibited. If the centerline is dashed on the drivers right side, passing is allowed. All passes must be completed before the centerlines are solid again.



## Pass Only When Safe

Most passing should be made on the left. Pass on the right only on roads with more than one lane going in the same direction if vehicles on the roadway are moving in two or more substantially continuous lines, or if the driver ahead is making a left turn. New Jersey law prohibits passing on the right shoulder of the roadway.

#### Do Not Pass:

- on a hill or a curve, or at any time sight lines are impeded
- at a street crossing or intersection
- at a railroad crossing
- on narrow bridges, or in an underpass and tunnels
- when a sign prohibits passing or center lines restrict passing
- when behind a vehicle that has stopped to let a pedestrian cross

## Driving Too Slowly

Try to keep up with the normal flow of traffic. Some accidents result from driving too slowly and backing up traffic. When road surfaces and traffic are normal, New Jersey law prohibits blocking traffic through slow driving.

## Keep to the Right

New Jersey law requires drivers to keep to the right, except when passing. Drive as closely as possible to the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway, except when passing another vehicle.

## Yielding the Right-of-Way

Laws govern which vehicle has the right of way, but drivers should always be prepared to yield. Some basic rules apply. Always yield to police cars, fire engines and ambulances when they are giving warning signs, such as flashing sirens and lights.

**State law requires that motorists always yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.**

## Controlled Intersections

An intersection where traffic is regulated by a traffic signal or regulatory sign is a controlled intersection.

Always stop at a multi-way stop or stop intersection. Always yield to the driver on the right if arriving simultaneously at a controlled intersection with regulatory signs, such as a four-way stop. Always yield to any driver already at or in an intersection.

When approaching an intersection controlled with a yield sign, slow down and yield to traffic on the intersecting roadway even if this requires a full stop.

When making a left turn at an intersection, yield to oncoming traffic and all pedestrians within a crosswalk.

(Driving on private property to avoid a traffic signal or sign is a motor vehicle violation.)

## Uncontrolled Intersections

An uncontrolled intersection is when two or more roads join and there is no traffic signal or regulatory device.

These are potentially dangerous intersections. Be very aware approaching an uncontrolled intersection. Most of the time there will be a warning sign. Be ready to stop if any traffic is coming from the right or left. Motorists entering the intersection from a private road or driveway must yield to all traffic on the main road. As a general rule, a vehicle on the left should yield to a vehicle on the right.

## Blind Intersections

Buildings, parked cars, or bushes can obstruct motorists' line of sight. On rural roadways, trees or crops may obstruct motorists' line of sight. Slow down or stop completely to make sure there is no cross traffic before proceeding.

## Entering Highways, Parkways and Turnpikes

Highways, parkways and turnpikes are divided roadways and are generally multi-laned. Traffic on each side of the divide will travel in only one direction. There are no direct intersections. Motorists enter these roadways on acceleration lanes, or extra lanes used by motorists to speed up to join the flow of traffic. Motorists must yield to traffic already on the roadway before moving from an acceleration lane into the proper lane.

**Keep the following in mind when entering a highway, parkway or turnpike:**

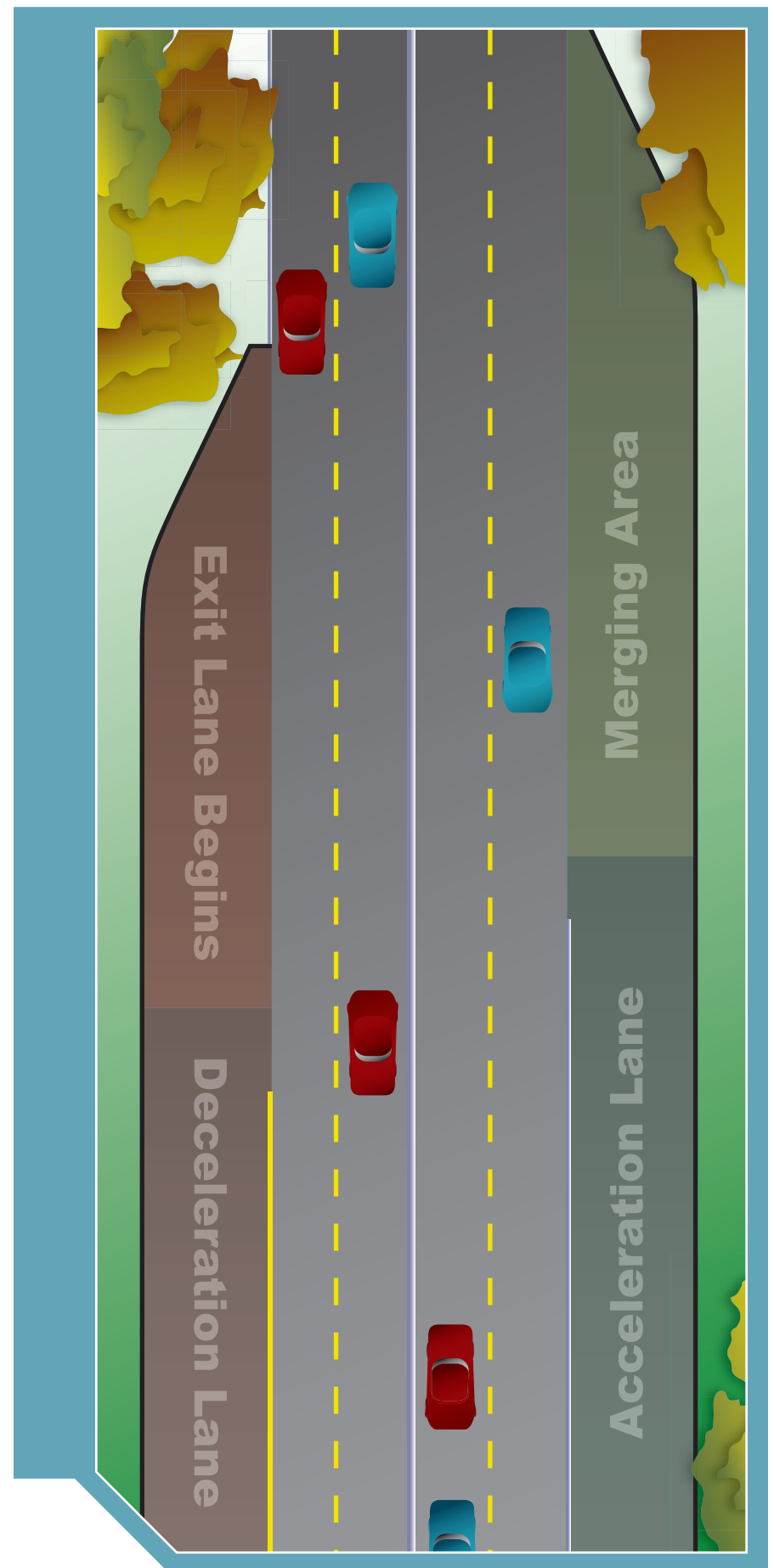
- Speed up to the flow of traffic when leaving the acceleration lane
- Try to avoid coming to a complete stop in the acceleration lane
- Yield to traffic and enter the right-hand lane when safe

## Leaving Highways, Parkways and Turnpikes

In most cases, exit ramps or deceleration lanes are located on the right of the roadway. Watch for turnoff signs.

**Keep the following in mind when leaving a highway, parkway or turnpike:**

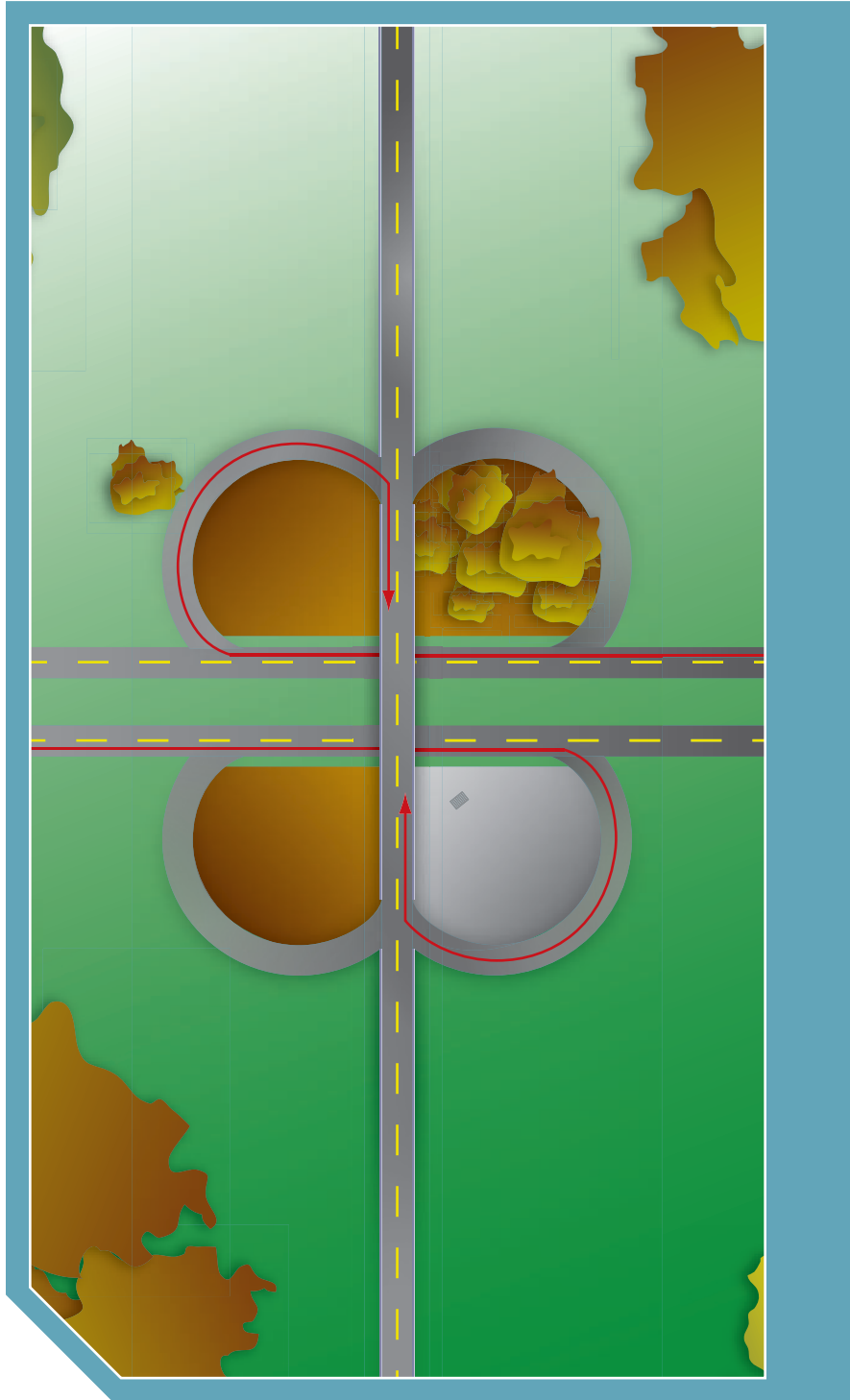
- Start slowing down when entering a deceleration lane to exit
- Obey the posted advisory speed limit of the deceleration lane
- When the exit is on the left of the roadway, watch for signs directing motorists to the proper lane for turnoff





## Interchanges (cloverleaves)

Divided roadways are built for express traffic. To smooth traffic flow, there are usually no traffic lights or direct intersections. To get on or off such a roadway, a cloverleaf turn is often necessary. Watch for entrance and exit signs. Drive slowly in the circle, obeying the posted speed limit.



## Turning Regulations

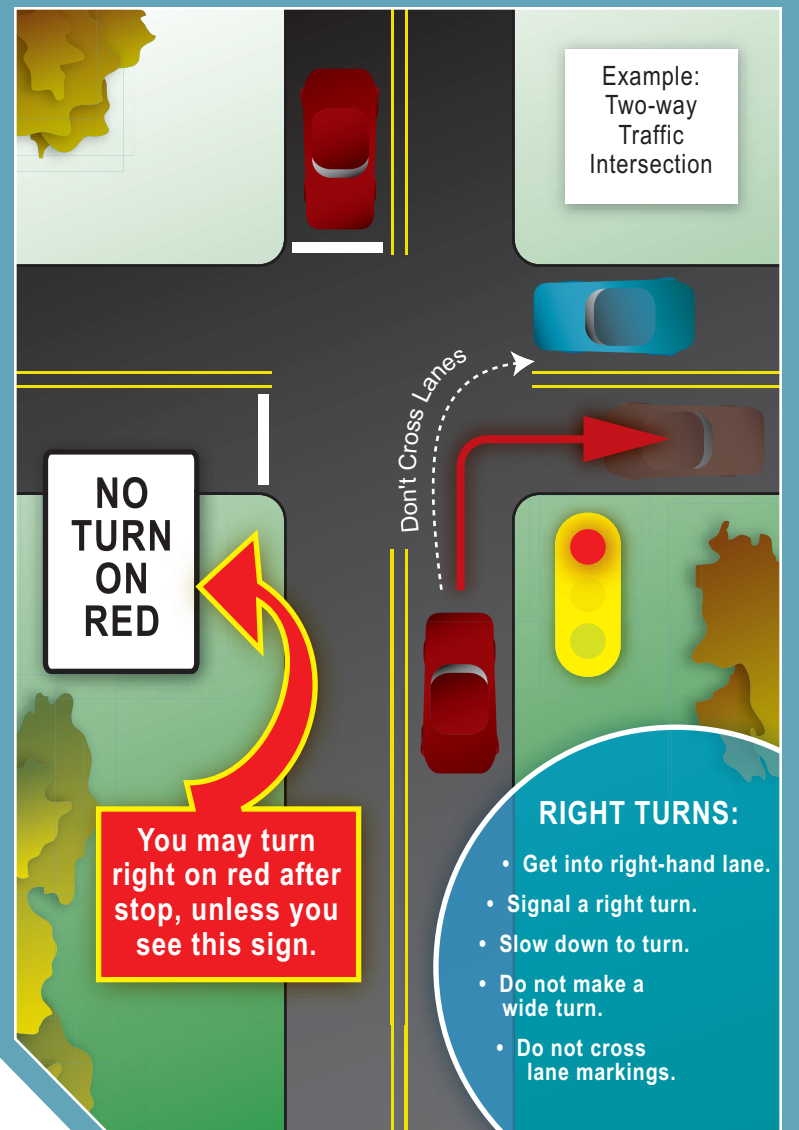
### Right Turn on Red

New Jersey law permits motorists to make a right turn at a red light after coming to a full stop, unless a No Turn On Red sign is posted. Yield to all oncoming traffic and pedestrians before turning right at a red light. Look for difficult-to-see vehicles, such as bicycles and mopeds, which may have a green light.

Always use a proper turn signal at least 100 feet before making any turn. Cancel the signal after the turn is complete.

### Right Turns

To make a right turn, drive to the intersection as closely to the right as possible, keeping near to the curb or parked cars. Do not swing outward while making a right turn. Do not swing into the wrong lane while making a right turn.



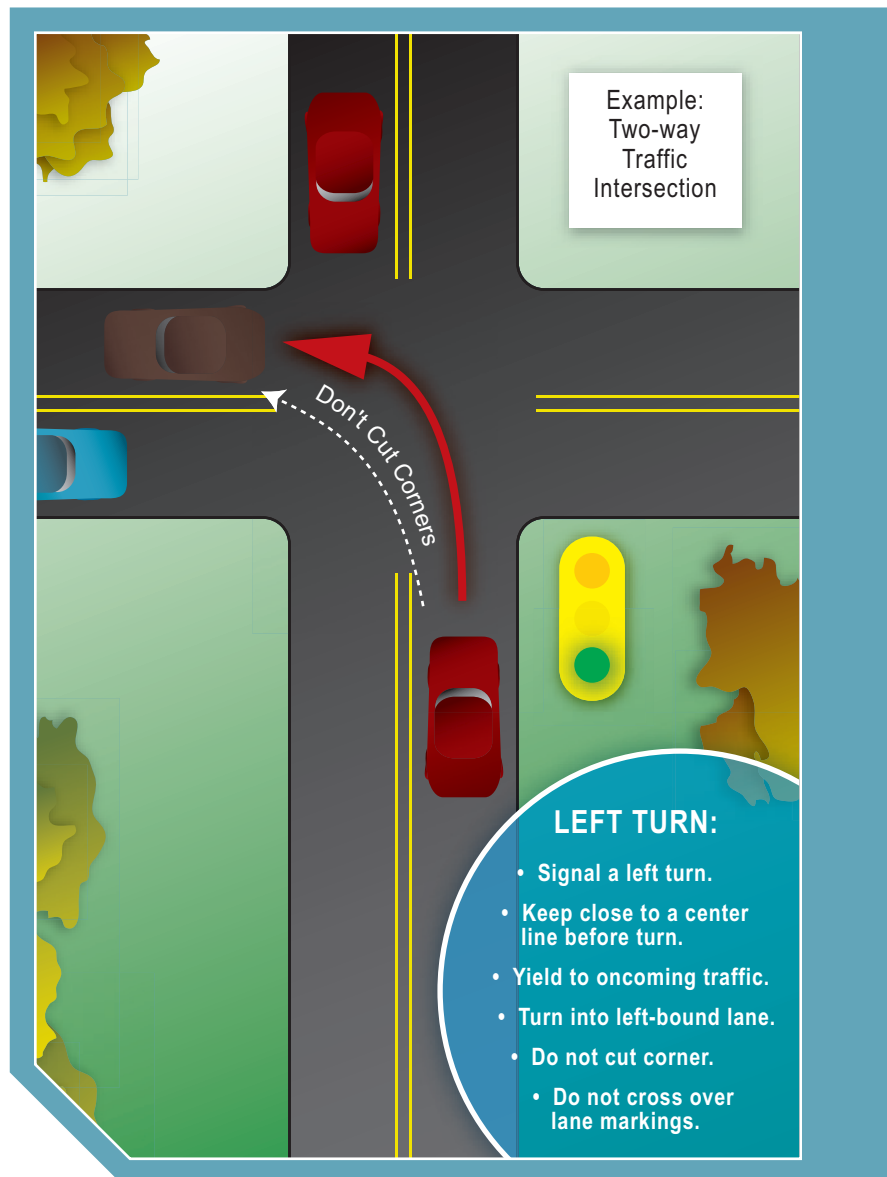
### Left Turns

When two vehicles converge at an intersection and both have signaled to turn left, extra caution must be applied. When it is safe, each driver should turn to the left of the center of the intersection.

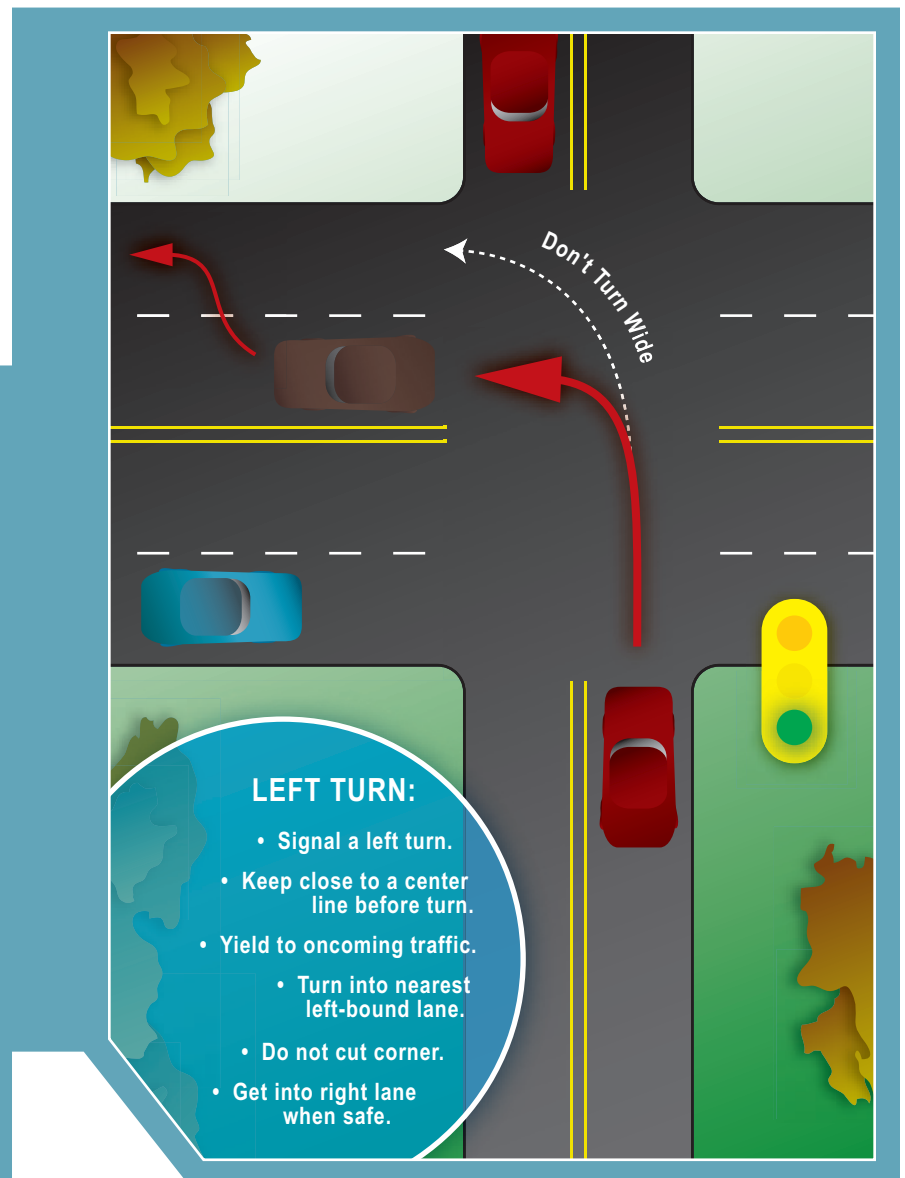
### Other left turns

To make a left turn from a one-way road into another one-way road, approach the turn in the left lane and turn into the left lane of the other road.

To make a **left turn from a two-way road into another two-way road**, approach the turn as closely to the center of the road as possible. Do not cross lane markings. Keep to the right of the new road.



To make a **left turn from a two-way road into a four-lane highway**, approach the turn as closely to the center line of the road as possible. Make the turn before reaching the center of the intersection. Do not cross lane markings. Turn into the left lane of the other road. This is the passing lane of the four-lane highway. When traffic permits, move to the right lane from the passing lane.



**Left turns, between intersections:** Often, there will be solid lines, prohibiting drivers from passing. However, these lines may be crossed with care when entering or leaving driveways in business or residential areas.

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## Circle Intersections

There are not set rules for driving into, around and out of a traffic circle in New Jersey. Common sense and caution must prevail at all times.

In most cases, the circle's historically established traffic pattern dictates which driver has the right of way. If a major highway flows into and through the circle, traffic from that highway usually dominates the traffic flow pattern by commanding the right of way. Traffic control signs, such as stop or yield signs, at the entrance to the circle also govern which driver has the right of way.

Never enter a traffic circle without first checking all signs and determining the intentions of motorists already in the traffic circle.

If a motorist is in doubt concerning which vehicle has the right of way, exercise extreme caution and remember the basic rule governing uncontrolled intersections: The vehicle to the left shall yield the right of way to a vehicle approaching from the right.

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## Stopping Regulations

Signs, signals and traffic rules indicate when a motorist should stop.

Never attempt to beat a traffic light change. Even if the light is changing to green, exercise caution. There may be one or more vehicles driving through the intersection. Accidents at traffic signals often happen shortly after the signal has changed.

When a yellow light follows a green light, prepare to stop. Only continue through an intersection where the light is changing from green to yellow if already in the intersection.

### When a Motorist Must Stop

- at an intersection with a stop sign
- at an intersection with a red light, flashing or otherwise
- when a traffic officer orders the motorist to stop
- when there is a yield sign and traffic does not permit a safe merge
- when a school bus is picking up or letting off children and/or red lights are flashing
- when coming from an alley, private driveway or building
- at a bridge span which is about to open for boat traffic
- for a blind pedestrian using a white or metallic-colored walking cane, or a trained guide dog, or guide dog instructor engaged in instructing a guide dog
- for a pedestrian in a crosswalk or at an intersection

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## Stopping at Railroad Crossings

For safety, the NJ Department of Transportation and railroad companies mark public highway railroad crossings with one or more warning devices. Some warning devices include advance warning signs, pavement markings in front of a railroad crossing, flashing lights (usually on crossbuck signs), gates or gates and flashing lights, bells and flag signals.

Motorists must stop at least 15 feet from railroad crossings when there are flashing lights, bells or flag signals. Lowering gates, or gates that have already been lowered, indicate a train is coming, and a motorist must stop. Never attempt to cross until the gates have been raised and lights have stopped flashing.

Some vehicles must ALWAYS stop at railroad crossings, such as school buses or tractor-trailers. When driving behind one of these vehicles, always be prepared to stop at a railroad crossing, even if traffic signals do not indicate a train is coming.

Always finish crossing railroad tracks. Do not stop. If a vehicle stalls on the railroad tracks and a train is coming, get out and walk clear of the tracks. Do not try to race a train. Most trains need more than a mile to stop if traveling 60 mph or more.

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## Stopping for School Buses

Do not pass or closely approach a school bus with flashing red lights.

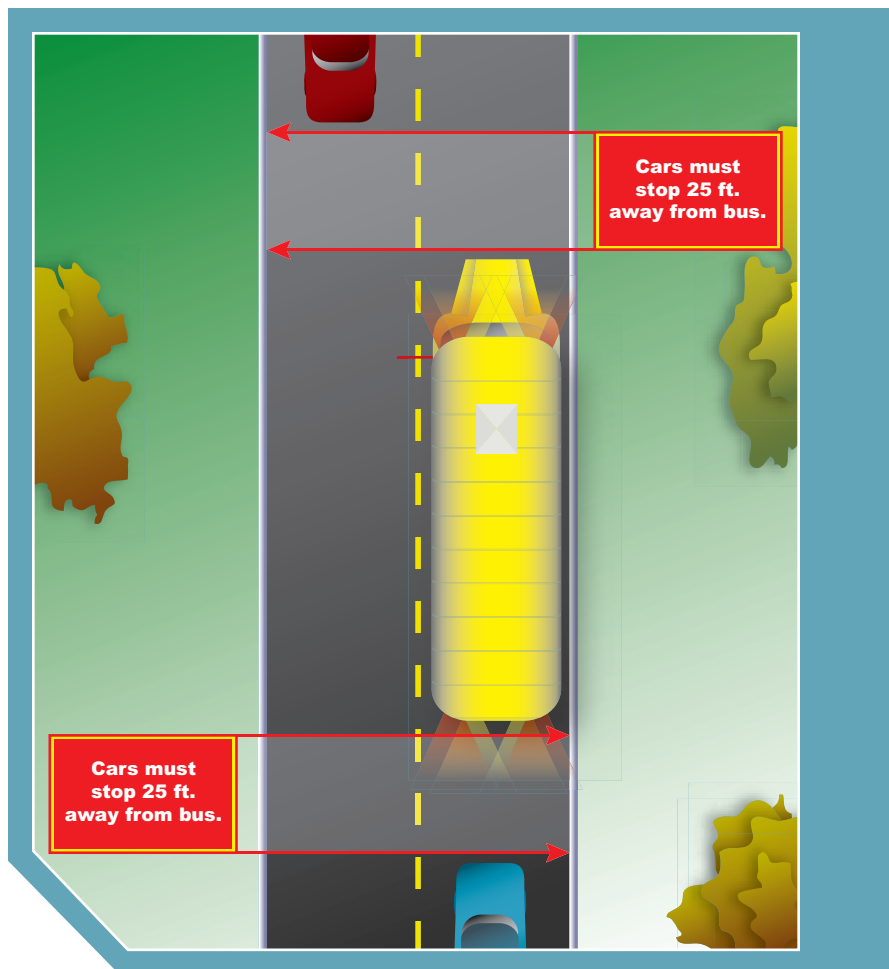
State law requires that motorists stop at least 25 feet away if traveling on a two-lane road, or on a multi-lane highway where lanes are only separated by lines, or on a privately maintained road.

Slow down to 10 mph if traveling on a dual highway, if on the opposite side of a safety island or a raised median.

School buses are equipped with yellow, amber or red flashing lights. Yellow or amber lights alight before the bus stops, and red lights go on when it has stopped. Do not depend on these lights if traveling behind a school bus. These lights could be malfunctioning.

When the bus stops, motorists traveling behind or approaching the bus must stop at least 25 feet from the school bus. Watch for children, and then proceed slowly, at 10 mph.

If a school bus has stopped directly in front of a school to pick up or let off children, pass from either direction at no more than 10 mph.



### Stopping for a Frozen Dessert Truck

When approaching or overtaking a frozen dessert truck, or ice cream truck, from either direction and it shows flashing red lights and/or a stop signal arm, yield the right of way to any person who is crossing the roadway to or from the vehicle. Watch out for children and be prepared to stop. Drive past the vehicle at a speed no faster than 15 mph. It is not necessary to stop on a dual highway when traveling on the other side of a safety island or raised median.

### Pulling Over and Stopping for Emergency Vehicles

New Jersey law requires all motorists to yield to emergency vehicles sounding sirens or flashing red and/or blue emergency lights. Steer to the extreme right of the roadway and stop. Wait for the emergency vehicle to pass. Afterward, keep at least 300 feet behind an emergency vehicle responding to an emergency call.

Police cars, fire trucks and ambulances have sirens and red and/or blue emergency lights. Private vehicles operated by volunteer fire and rescue squad members (with emergency vehicle identification) responding to an emergency call use blue lights. Do not

park within 200 feet of a fire department vehicle in service. Never drive over a fire hose unless directed to do so by a fire, emergency rescue or police official.

### Using Lights

**New Jersey law requires all motorists to turn a vehicle's headlights on whenever windshield wipers are in use.**

Headlights must also be used between one-half hour before sunset and one-half hour after sunrise, during rain, snow and ice storms, and when fog or smoke is present. Additionally, headlights must be turned on whenever visibility is less than 500 feet. Being able to see clearly while driving is very important. Headlights help drivers see clearly.

Make sure headlights are in good working order and clean. Headlights help other drivers identify where oncoming and merging traffic is located. Parking lights legally cannot be used when conditions require headlights.

### Bright and Dim

Headlights have two sets of beams. Motorists may switch between bright (high) and dim (low) beams by using a switch or button located on or near the dashboard of the vehicle.

Bright beams are used for open country driving where there is no traffic in sight. The bright beam helps motorists see farther ahead and peripherally, or at a wider angle. Bright beams can momentarily blind other drivers and should not be used if other vehicles are approaching, or when driving behind another vehicle.

Dim beams are used for city driving and driving in traffic on roadways. The dim beams are focused down on the road. Dim beams are for use when traveling behind other vehicles or when another vehicle is approaching.

### Other Types of Beams (lights)

Parking lights should only be used for a short time, such as when a vehicle is left in a permitted zone to show other motorists where a vehicle is parked. Parking lights are required on vehicles parked in areas other than business or residential zones.

Taillights should turn on simultaneously as a vehicle's headlights and parking lights. Taillights become brighter when pressure is applied to brakes, even in daylight when headlights are not turned on.

Overhead lights inside a vehicle should only be used briefly when a motorist is driving, or to comply with a police officer's request to illuminate the driver's compartment of the vehicle when stopped. Dashboard lights should be visible, but not so bright that they distract the driver.

Spotlights should only be used in emergencies. This applies to emergency flashers, too. Never use spotlights for driving purposes.



## Parking Regulations

Check for traffic when leaving a vehicle after parking. Check for bicycles and mopeds, which are sometimes difficult to see, before opening the driver-side door and exiting the vehicle.

Look at all parking-related signs for parking restrictions. It is illegal to park more than six inches from the curb.

**Except to avoid an accident or unless directed to do so by a police officer, do not park:**

- on a crosswalk
- between a safety zone for pedestrians and the adjacent curb, or 20 feet from the end of a safety zone
- near properly marked street construction
- in a space on public or private property marked for the handicapped
- on an interstate highway
- in a bus stop zone
- in front of a public or private driveway
- within an intersection
- within 10 feet of a fire hydrant
- within 25 feet of a crosswalk at an intersection or side line of a street or intersection highway, except at alleys
  - within 50 feet of a railroad crossing
  - within 50 feet of a stop sign
  - within 20 feet of the driveway entrance to any fire station; and 75 feet on the street opposite a fire station entrance
  - on any bridge, elevated roadway or in any tunnel
  - next to another vehicle parked at the curb, known as double parking
- in any area where parking is prohibited by municipal ordinance

In case of mechanical trouble or other emergency situation, stop on the right shoulder of the roadway. Park clear of moving traffic.

## Littering

Throwing trash, refuse or rubbish from a moving or parked vehicle is illegal. Litter is a safety hazard and an eyesore. Fines of up to \$1,000 can be levied on drivers found throwing dangerous objects from a vehicle onto a roadway. If the vehicle is moving when litter is thrown, the driver's license could be suspended. Any trash, refuse or rubbish being carried in a vehicle must be covered to keep it from littering the roadway.

## Special Vehicle Regulations

### Bicycles, Roller- and In-line Skates, Skateboards

Riders of bicycles, roller skates, in-line skates and skateboards must obey the same traffic laws as drivers of motor vehicles, in addition to having the same rights and duties as drivers of motor vehicles.

Signal all turns and stops, using the standard hand signals. Do not ride, skate or skateboard more than two abreast with others. Never hold on to other vehicles or carry a passenger without using an attached seat.

Bicycles are required to have brakes in good working order, as well as a bell or other signal (not a siren or whistle) that can be heard 100 feet away. If used after dark, bicycles must have a headlight and red taillight, which can be seen from at least 500 feet away.

For safety at night, reflective clothing should be worn. Bicycle riders, or skaters and skateboarders under 14 years old, being towed by a bicycle, must wear a safety helmet approved by the American National Standards Institute or the Snell Memorial Foundation.

### Motorized Bicycle/Moped Regulations

Moped operators must wear helmets and obey all New Jersey motor vehicle laws and regulations for motor vehicles, bicycles and mopeds.

Any person with a valid driver or motorcycle license may operate a moped. Any person 15 years or older without a valid driver or motorcycle license must obtain a moped license to operate a moped.

More information regarding mopeds can be found in the New Jersey Moped Manual. Visit any motor vehicle agency for a New Jersey Moped Manual or on the Web at [www.njmvc.gov](http://www.njmvc.gov).

### Motorcycle Regulations

Motorcyclists must obey all traffic laws. Riders must wear a helmet and face or eye protection. Use standard hand signals to signal turns and stops if the motorcycle does not have direction indicators. Never straddle a lane or ride between lanes of traffic or between traffic and parked cars.

Motorcyclists are not permitted to ride more than two abreast in any one lane of traffic. Passing regulations are the same as those regulating passenger cars.

### Snowmobiles and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Snowmobiles and ATVs operated on public lands, waters or across roads must be registered. Annual registration costs are:



Residents	Fee
Snowmobile	\$5
ATV	\$10

Non-residents	Fee
Snowmobile	\$7
ATV	\$12

Always carry proof of liability insurance and current registration. Registration numbers must be displayed on the outside of the vehicle.

**Specific rules for operating a snowmobile or ATV on public lands, waters or across a public highway include:**

- 14 years or older
- 16 years or older to operate an ATV with an engine capacity greater than 90 cubic centimeters (CCs)
- 18 years or older to operate an ATV without completing an ATV training course. Riders under 18 must carry a certificate of completion. Call (800) 887-2887 for more information.

**Cellular Telephones**

Effective July 1, 2004, motorists in New Jersey may NOT use a hand-held wireless telephone while driving a motor vehicle on any public road or highway. However, motorists may use a hands-free wireless telephone if it does not interfere with any federally required safety equipment or with the safe operation of the vehicle.

A hand-held wireless telephone may be used only in certain instances, which include:

**For safety reasons or to report a criminal act, and to report**

- fire
- traffic accident
- serious road hazard
- medical emergency
- hazardous material emergency

Motorists in the above-mentioned circumstances must keep one hand on the steering wheel while using a hand-held cellular telephone.

To prove the legal use of a hand-held cellular telephone while operating a motor vehicle, a motorist may be asked to produce testimony or written statements from appropriate authorities, or telephone records.

The fine for breaking this law is between \$100 and \$250.

